

# ACADEMY OF SPINAL CORD INJURY PROFESSIONALS

## Utilizing a Wheelchair Clinic Program for Inpatient Rehabilitation for Spinal Cord Injury Seating and Positioning: Program Development

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### Background and Purpose

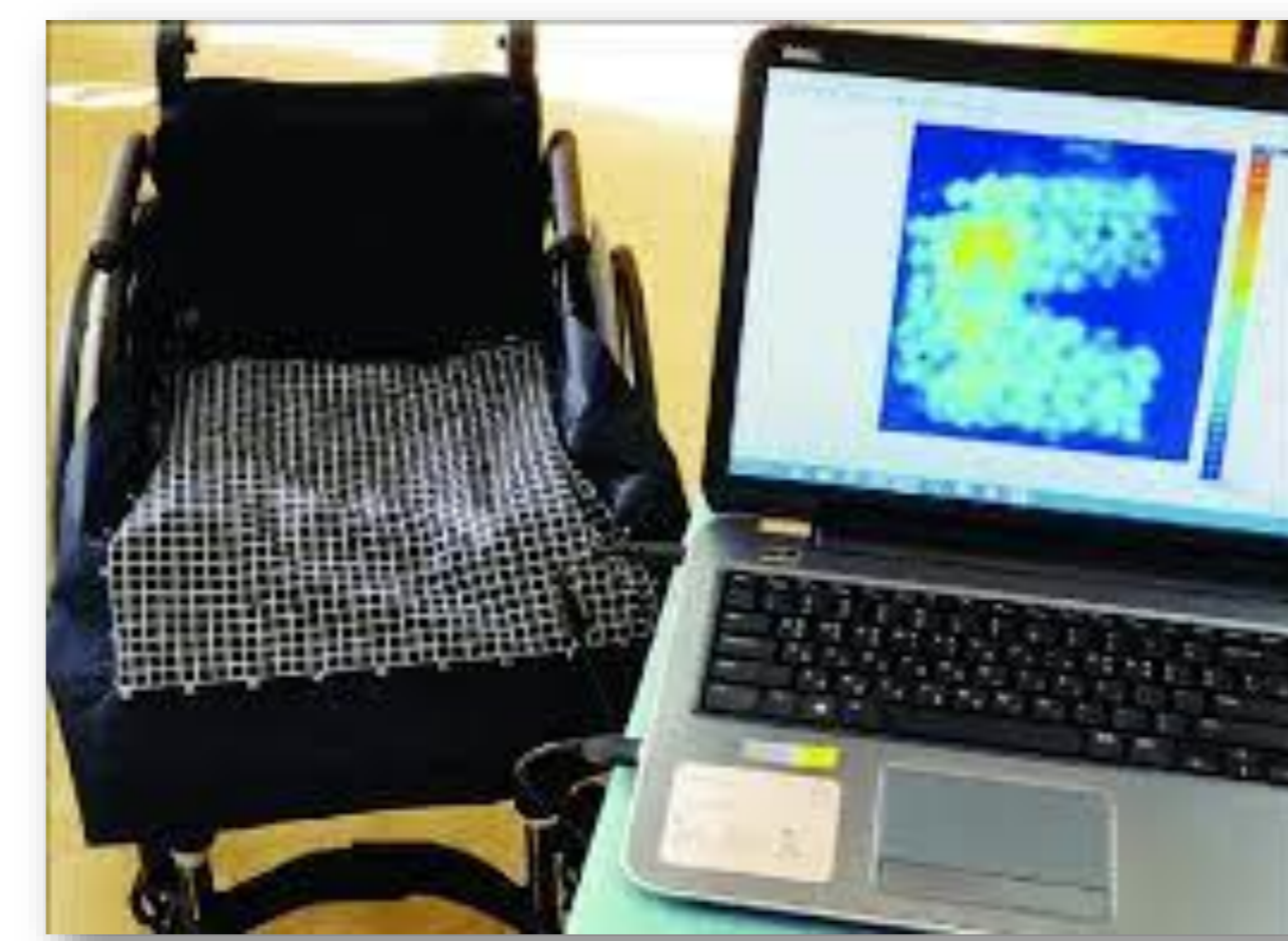
California Rehabilitation Institute (Cal Rehab) is a joint venture with Select Medical, UCLA and Cedars-Sinai Hospital. It is a free standing hospital with 13 floors consisting of 138 private patient rooms. There is an outpatient facility located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. Our spinal cord injury and disorders (SCI/D) program spans two patient floors with 2 physicians, 11 therapists, 2 case managers, 2 psychologists, 1 recreational therapists, and rehab nursing. Having a designated inpatient wheelchair clinic program, lead by an Assistive Technology Professional, enhances the inpatient rehabilitation SCI program by providing on-site expertise, availability of trialing numerous custom wheelchairs and cushions, and provides program education and resources to staff. A specialty wheelchair clinic allows prompt identification of mobility needs and continuity of care when discharged into the community.

### Wheelchair Clinic Process

- Patient referrals are e-mailed to a wheelchair clinic account
- Patient is assessed and screened for appropriate seating and positioning equipment
- Appropriate wheelchair and cushion are provided to the patient and re-assessed during their stay
- Pressure mapping is completed for skin integrity and determining optimal cushion for equipment order
- Patient is seen with primary therapist, wheelchair clinic, and outside wheelchair vendor/ATP to complete custom wheelchair order
- Patient provided with comparable loaner equipment (wheelchair and cushion) for home use until new custom seating system is approved and delivered
- Wheelchair vendor companies have consistent, weekly times on-site to provide and modify equipment, complete custom orders, and provide loaner equipment for discharge home
- Patients can follow-up in outpatient for any wheelchair maintenance or needed modifications



Wheelchair Clinic supplies for modifying patients seating, positioning, and mobility needs. Items include: backrest hardware, seat belts, spare brakes, positioning wedges and supports, power assist products, adaptive rim grips.

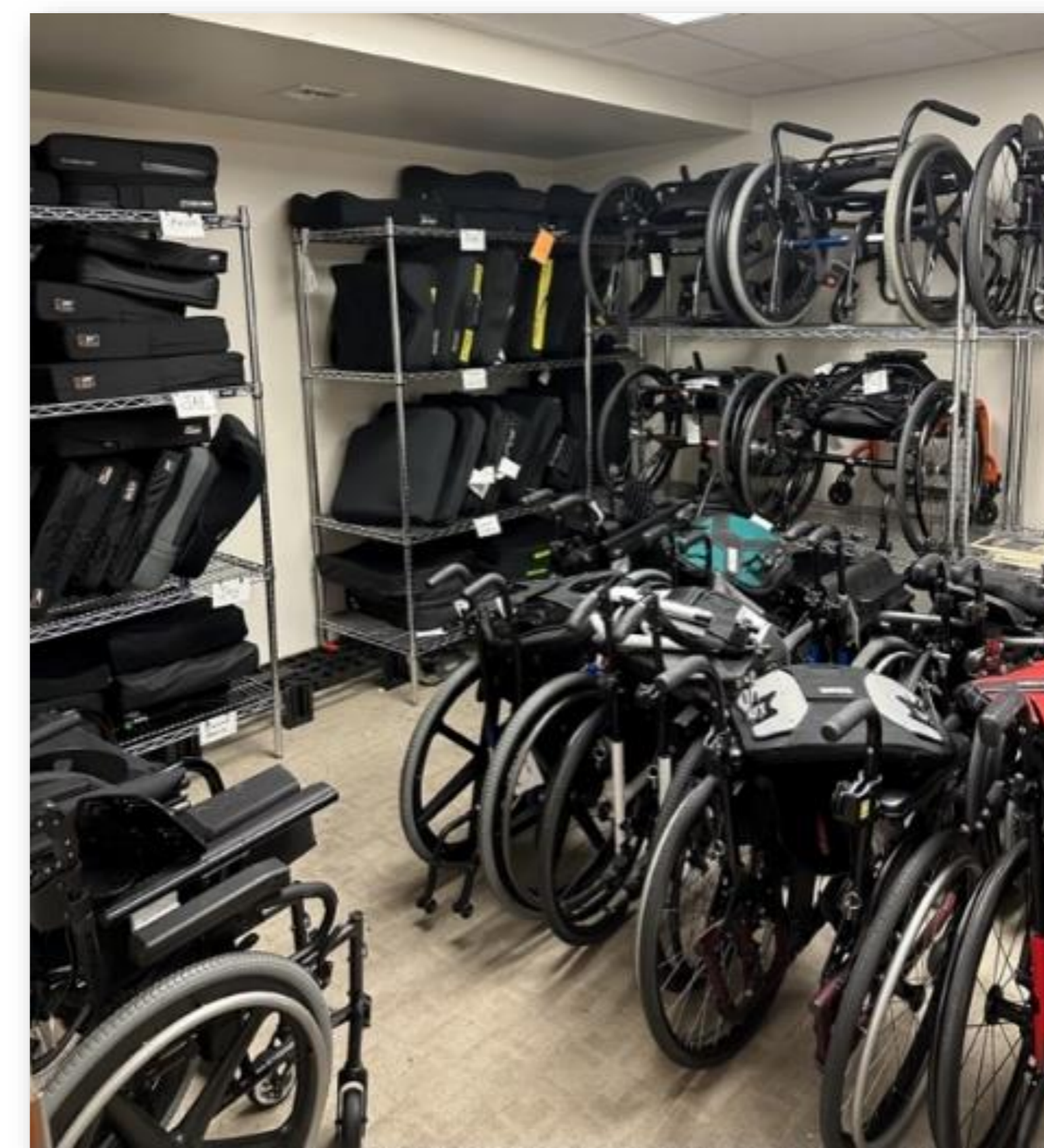


Pressure mapping system used to determine optimal skin integrity and positioning cushions for each patient

- Camber is where the top of the wheels are angled in towards the seat creating greater stability and enhancing the turning radius.
- The downside of camber is that it increases the overall width of the wheelchair limiting access through some doorways if the patient is already sitting in a wider wheelchair.
- Ideally, some camber should be added to high, active wheelchair users if there is no concern about overall wheelchair width.



Excerpt from the Cal Rehab custom wheelchair order guide resource



Designated storage area for custom wheelchair and cushion demos

### Wheelchair Clinic On-Site Resources

- Pressure mapping systems
- In-house wheelchair and cushion demos with broad product representation
- Power wheelchairs, alternative drive controls, and power assist demos
- In-house storage of wheelchair parts to trial for seating and positioning (backrests with various contour and mounting hardware, headrests, positioning supports, etc.)
- Spare parts for wheelchair maintenance if needed (brakes, anti-tippers, etc)
- Resource binder for wheelchair parts selection and rationale to assist therapy staff in custom order decision making
- Wheelchair order checklists to assist therapists during custom wheelchair orders

### Conclusions and Program Benefits

Establishing a specialized inpatient wheelchair clinic program for SCI/D treatment allows patients to have their mobility and seating needs addressed on admission. The program ensures appropriate seating and mobility needs have been met to provide a safe discharge back into the community. The inpatient wheelchair clinic provides improved SCI/D care for seating and mobility needs and continuity utilizing the outpatient wheelchair clinic for follow-up care. Utilizing a Wheelchair Clinic program allows staff to have a central source of expertise, education, and training. The specialized program improves patient satisfaction with their seating and mobility while promoting patients' independence with mobility during their inpatient admission. The loaner program with the assistance of the wheelchair vendors ensures that patients mobility, positioning, and skin integrity are maintained after discharge into the community.

### References

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